ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 240

Commending the Historic 1917 Courthouse in Chesterfield County.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 16, 2018
Agreed to by the Senate, February 22, 2018

WHEREAS, the cornerstone for the Historic 1917 Courthouse in Chesterfield County was laid on October 26, 1917, and the county celebrated the 100th anniversary of this occasion in 2017; and

WHEREAS, the 1917 Courthouse is a point of pride in the Chesterfield community, and the county strives to preserve this important historical site for future generations; and

WHEREAS, the 1917 Courthouse is a Chesterfield County Historic Landmark and a Virginia Historic Landmark, and it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places; and

WHEREAS, the 1917 Courthouse sits on the same site where the first colonial courthouse, built in 1749, was once located; and

WHEREAS, in 1916, plans were made to demolish the 1749 courthouse and replace it with a larger and more modern one; this decision was met with opposition from some residents, and resulted in the first preservation struggle in Chesterfield County, which was ended when the Board of Supervisors elected to construct the new building, the 1917 Courthouse, which was opened after only eight months of construction; and

WHEREAS, the 1917 Courthouse is an excellent example of the Colonial Revival style of architecture, with four prominent Roman Doric columns and portico, crowned with an octagonal belfry, and an interior courtroom that boasts the original woodwork; and

WHEREAS, for many years, the cupola of the 1917 Courthouse contained a bell from the 1749 courthouse, which is the oldest historical artifact in Chesterfield County and is three years older than the Liberty Bell; as part of that centennial commemoration, Chesterfield County's 1917/1918 Centennial Committee replaced the 1749 bell with a restored 1860 bell; the 1749 bell was cleaned, stabilized, and placed on permanent display in the Chesterfield County Museum to preserve it for the future, and so that Chesterfield County residents can remember when it was rung when court was in session; and

WHEREAS, the cornerstone of the 1917 Courthouse was inscribed with the names of the Board of Supervisors at that time, and was laid by members of the Masons on October 26, 1917; and

WHEREAS, as part of the ceremony on October 26, 1917, a county fair was held; there were speeches by politicians, and 100 men who had been drafted for World War I were camped on the courthouse green; and

WHEREAS, Chesterfield County's 1917/1918 Centennial Committee also planned a special event for October 26, 2017, to commemorate the day that the cornerstone of the 1917 Courthouse was laid; the 1860 replacement courthouse bell was unveiled and rung, the 1749 bell was on display in the Chesterfield County Museum, a new interpretive sign was unveiled, and a reenactment of the first case in the courthouse was performed; and

WHEREAS, the Chesterfield County Historic 1917 Courthouse, the 1917/1918 Centennial Committee, and Fort Lee collaborated to celebrate this commemorative year since Fort Lee also celebrated its 100th anniversary; and

WHEREAS, Chesterfield County residents should feel pride that the 1917 Courthouse represents a revered, important, and well-preserved historic building that is part of other preserved buildings on the courthouse green, including the 1828 Clerk's Office, the 1889 Clerk's Office, and the 1892 Old Jail; and

WHEREAS, renovations to the 1917 Courthouse were completed and the building was rededicated in 2014; it continues to be used to hear cases by the Chesterfield County Courts; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the Historic 1917 Courthouse in Chesterfield County on the occasion of its 100th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Chesterfield Historical Society of Virginia as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the history and heritage of Chesterfield County.

ENROLLED